

The Federal Election Commission,  
Office of General Counsel,  
999 E. Street NW,  
Washington, D. C. 20463

FEDERAL ELECTION  
COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF GENERAL  
COUNSEL

MAY 30 12 53 PM '00

May 10, 2000

**Re: Complaint to the F.E.C. regarding Regulatory violations of 11 C.F.R. § 110.13 (c).**

The pertinent regulation of the FEC that is in violation is 11 CFR § 110.13(c): **"Criteria for candidate selection. For all debates, staging organization(s) must use pre-established objective criteria to determine which candidates may participate in a debate. For general election debates, staging organizations(s) shall not use nomination by a particular political party as the sole objective criterion to determine whether to include a candidate in a debate...."** (emphasis added)

On January 6, 2000 the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) co-chairmen Paul G. Kirk, Jr. and Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr. announced the candidate selection criteria to be used in the 2000 general election debates as well as the dates and sites for the debates. See EXHIBIT A (also found at: <http://www.debates.org/pages/news3.html> )

One of the three Presidential Debate Commission's published 'criteria' is not 'objective' and violates the FEC Regulations mandating that 'sponsoring organizations' **MUST HAVE 'PRE-EXISTING OBJECTIVE CRITERIA'** (emphasis added) to determine which candidates may participate in the Presidential and Vice Presidential debates for year 2000. See 11 CFR §110.13 (c) Id.

The three criteria were stated by the Presidential Debate Commission: 1) That the candidate seeking to participate must be eligible under the Constitution to be President; 2) that the candidate be on the ballot in enough states to have the mathematical possibility of winning in the electoral college, and 3) that the candidate demonstrate his acceptance by the public by five polls giving that candidate at least a 15% average from their results.

While the first two criteria are indeed 'objective', i.e. easily measurable by facts, the third is NOT. While polling has come a long way towards being 'scientific' this particular 'criteria' is neither fair nor 'objective'.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines 'objective' as: "expressing or dealing with facts or conditions perceived without distortion by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations"; "limited to choices of fixed alternatives and reducing subjective factors to a minimum".

The Thesaurus gives 'objective' as an adjective the following meanings: "factual, actual, fair, impartial, just, judicious, equitable, neutral, disinterested, dispassionate, open-minded, detached, unbiased, unprejudiced, evenhanded, and uncolored".

A candidate's eligibility under the Constitution can be objectively determined. U.S. Constitution, ARTICLE II, Section 1., Clause 5 (also found at: <http://www.house.gov/Constitution/Constitution.html> )

The candidate's being on the ballot in enough states to establish 270 electoral votes can be objectively determined. Exhibit A1 (also found at: <http://www.nara.gov/fedreg/96ecvote.html> )

Polls under any structure or in any number CANNOT be objectively determined.

Larry Sabato, professor of government at the University of Virginia and author of '*The Rise of Political Consultants*' (Basic Books, 1981) and '*Dirty Little Secrets*' (Random House 1996) is quoted as saying "Polling is not that precise, even when you average five polls you don't eliminate the individual margins of error." This statement was in response to questions posed to him about the Presidential Debate Commission's 'new criteria' when they were first published.

In an article review of "*The Rise of Political Consultants*", Charles E. Cruce groups 'polling' as one of the services of the "campaign professionals who are engaged in the provision of advice and services". EXHIBIT B (also found at: <http://www.tamucc.edu/~whatley/PADM5302/theo36b.htm> ).

One of the stated goals of the Federal Election Commission is that they not only BE FAIR but that they GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF BEING FAIR. This is stated clearly in the 'Twenty Year Report' of the FEC. (found at: <http://www.fec.gov/pages/20year.htm> ).

Recently we took a 'poll' of over 838 individuals via e-mail. Our single question was, "Do you think that political polls are objective?" The responses were at a ratio of sixteen (16) to one (1) that they are NOT objective! Some few said they were 'sometimes' objective. Several individuals said they could not answer the question as phrased.

What is gained by having a debate restricted to the Republican and Democratic candidates? Their views on issues will have been heard *ad nauseam* for over a year before the debates take place. The views on issues by third party candidates are important to the American voter. Informed decisions about voting come only with the opportunity for voter education. Debates are the most prominent decision maker since the era of televised debates came into being.

Arianna Huffington in a recent article, 'World's Greatest Democracy?', EXHIBIT C (also found at: <http://www.jewishworldreview.com/cols/arianna101999.asp> ), speaks about the 'importance of opening access to debates', citing Governor Jesse Ventura's

success after being included in the Gubernatorial debates in Minnesota in 1998, and the difference between Ross Perot's 18.7% of the vote when included in the 1992 debates and his 8.4% when excluded in 1996.

According to a statement Ms Huffington quotes from George Stephanopoulos, the Clinton campaign wanted the 1996 presidential debates to be a non-event...and that's exactly what they were, with 100 million fewer viewers than the debates in 1992 garnered. The 1992 debates, by contrast, with a third candidate included, had the highest viewer turnout in history. So the presidential debates went from being the highest turnout in 1992 to the lowest viewer turnout in general-election debate history in 1996!

Let's check out polling 101 as found on the 'All About' series on the internet.  
EXHIBIT D (also found at:  
<http://math.about.com/education/math/library/weekly/aa011200a.htm> )

These articles give the low down on 'The Statistics Behind Political Polls', 'Polling Questions', and 'Margin of Error'. The bottom line is that polling is NOT an exact science. It is NOT objective!

The Pew Research Center For The People & The Press, posted an article entitled, POLL ANALYSIS: March 4, 1999. EXHIBIT E (also found at: <http://www.people-press.org/99watch1.htm> ) The information on polls and their potential errors are clear in that article.

The best example of potential problems with polls used as 'objective criteria' are the actual polls from the 1998 Minnesota Gubernatorial race. It is obvious from those polls that the debates are paramount in winning political races! In Minnesota in 1998, Jesse Ventura 'shocked the world' and especially the pollsters! EXHIBIT F (also found at: <http://www.intellectualcapital.com/politics/minnesota.asp> )

The graph on page two of that article shows the following:

July 1998	Humphrey	39% (Democrat)
	Coleman	35% (Republican)
	Ventura	11% (Reform)
Early Sept '98	Humphrey	41%
	Coleman	31%
	Ventura	13%
Late Sept '98	Humphrey	49%
	Coleman	29%
	Ventura	10%

Then came the debates which included Jesse Ventura, between October 1<sup>st</sup> and October 27<sup>th</sup>

, a total of five(5) debates.

October '98	Humphrey	36%
	Coleman	34%
	Ventura	21%

And the election results!

Nov 4, 1998	Humphrey	28%
	Coleman	35%
	Ventura	<b>37% THE WINNER!</b>

In an article on October 27 Jesse Ventura was labeled 'the spoiler' when he was at 21% and Humphrey and Coleman were only a point or two away from each other.

EXHIBIT G (also found at: <http://cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/stories/1998/10/27/mn.gov/> )

The debates made the difference. They did what political debates are supposed to do, they informed the public. They gave the public information about each candidate that would otherwise not have been broadcast publicly for all voters to hear in order to make an informed decision on election day. Inclusion in the debates leveled the playing field and made it fair. Inclusion gives the voters an option between apathy and indifference and interest in exercising the right to vote! Had the criteria of the Commission on Presidential Debates been utilized in MN in 1998, Jesse Ventura, who was at 10% prior to the debates, would not have been permitted to participate and would not have won that election.

The Arizona Republic, dated Feb. 27, 2000, in the article entitled "Political polls have role, but analysis can be misleading", the author makes this statement: "A poll, remember, is a snapshot, a point in time. It doesn't predict the outcome of elections. It doesn't provide context or show a pattern unless compared with something else- another time, another place, another set of people." EXHIBIT H (also available at: <http://www.azcentral.com/news/cols/0227deur.shtml> )

In his recent article about the 'Hosing of America', Jack Koenig says, "It must be remembered that even if a polling organization has strict procedures in place to minimize manipulation, knowledgeable individuals can always circumvent the rules. The old axiom, "Figures Lie and Liars Figure" is something to remember when viewing polling results. EXHIBIT I (find full article: <http://www.impactnet.org/HosingOfAmer.htm> )

David W. Rohde, University Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Michigan State University warned us to beware of polls in a 1996 article, "What Do Political Polls Really Tell Us?". EXHIBIT J (see : <http://www.ippsr.msu.edu/policy/persp/s96/page1.htm> )

Richard Winger's "Ballot Access News" is always filled with pertinent information. The November 8, 1998 edition gives us an overview of the continued exclusion of third

parties from debates in most states, but also shows that in 1998 nineteen states minor party candidates for Governor, U.S Senate, or Congress-at-large, debated their major party opponents. This was similar to the same occurrence in 1994. EXHIBIT K (see also:

<http://www.ballot-access.org/1998/1108.html#07> )

And then we have the 'Wizard of Id' on polls! EXHIBIT L.(see also<http://home.naxs.com/mcgoats/idwizard.htm>)

We agree with the Commission on Presidential Debates that a third 'objective criteria' is needed in order to narrow the potential field and make the numbers manageable. But the criteria MUST comport with the mandatory regulations of the Federal Election Commission as found in 11 CFR §110.13(c ). If it does not it will generate multiple lawsuits that would be unnecessary if the regulations are complied with.

Polling, even the average of several polls, or a hundred polls, does not meet the definition of 'objective'. The imprecision of polls rules them out. Making criteria that definitely will rule out all third parties will only increase public apathy, cynicism, and indifference.

The one time that our family was polled was in 1996. The question was: "Are you going to vote Republican or Democratic?" Our response was "Reform Party". The pollster then said, "Oh, then you're 'undecided'" We repeated, "No we're not 'undecided' we are going to vote for the Reform Party candidate!" To which the pollster said, "We count that 'undecided'!" Similar stories have emerged from our recent 'e-mail poll'.

If a third criteria that is actually 'objective' were to be substituted for polling, the debate criteria would be seen as fair and the FEC mandatory regulations would be followed.

For instance, if a monetary amount were set that a candidate must have spent on his/her campaign by a specific time prior to the first debate, say Labor Day, THAT would be 'objective' and incontestable. If this figure were \$500,000.00 by Labor Day and prior to the first debate, it would have meant the inclusion of Ross Perot, John Haeglin, and Harry Browne in the 1996 debates. No others qualified. Primary debates have more than five participants without any difficulty at all, in fact it generates much more interest. We determined who would have been eligible by checking the FEC reports online. (see: <http://www.fec.gov/publicrecords.html> )

Since the Democratic and Republican candidates are automatically included, as they are automatically on the ballot in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, it would appear that they have little interest in seeing that the American voters have the opportunity to hear the views of others and be able to make an informed decision at the polls. In fact these exclusionary tactics that pertain to elections are becoming more and more a reason for citizens to vote for a third party candidate or stay at home. Fairness gains respect and assumes honesty. Bias and prohibition causes distrust and suspicion.

We need MORE voters to turn out on election day, not less. The average citizen feels impotent, unable to make any difference in the politics of this country. The only way to generate interest is to show equity and fairness in the interpretation of existing regulations. If a regulation is mandatory it must be followed to the letter. To generate voter interest the debates must be fair, inclusive rather than exclusive, and not a non-event like the 1996 debates. In 1998 Minnesota broke all records for voter turn-out on election day.

**Total Voting Age Population: 3483000**

**Total Voting: 2105377**

**Total Percentage 60.45%**

**Election Day Registration: 332540**

**Percentage: 15.79%**

**Absentee Voters: 93348**

**Percentage: 4.43%**

Statistics from: 'Minnesota County Voter Turnout General Election 1998'  
(found at: <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/election/ctvgen.html> )

See voter turn out analysis by age, 1972-1996 at:

<http://www.fec.gov/pages/agedemog.htm>

This is an FEC analysis too complicated to print for this complaint, but interesting for those who are interested in statistics.

By contrast, EXHIBIT M (also found at:

<http://www.bettercampaigns.org/documents/turnout.htm> ) clearly shows that voter turnout increased in 1992 when a third party candidate participated in the debates!

Compare the 60% vote in Minnesota in 1998 to the declining interest in Presidential elections since 1960 when THEY were at the 60% level! Again note the 1992 result of 55.24% following the inclusion of a third party candidate in the debates!

The following figures are from:

[http://www.ruralvermont.com/diner/chat\\_government/messages/107.html](http://www.ruralvermont.com/diner/chat_government/messages/107.html)

National Voter turnout:

1996	48.99%
1994	38.79%
1992	55.24%
1990	36.53%
1988	50.11%
1986	36.42%
1984	53.11%
1982	40.09%
1980	52.56%

1978	37.77%
1976	53.55%
1974	38.31%
1972	55.21%
1970	46.78%
1968	60.84%
1966	48.40%
1964	61.92%
1962	47.36%
1960	63.06%

The Federal Election Commission has but two choices in our opinion:

1978 37.77%  
1976 53.55%  
1974 38.31%  
1972 55.21%  
1970 46.78%  
1968 60.84%  
1966 48.40%  
1964 61.92%  
1962 47.36%  
1960 63.06%

The Federal Election Commission has but two choices in our opinion:

- 1) To exclude the Presidential Debate Commission as a 'sponsoring organization' if they maintain the three criteria as now published; or
- 2) To require that they eliminate the polling from their criteria and substitute some truly objective criteria that would still give some third party candidates the opportunity to compete.

Respectfully submitted,

*Mary Clare Wohlford*

Mary Clare and Bill Wohlford  
249 Tenth Street NW  
Pulaski, VA 24301

*Paul T. DeLoach*

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this 24<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2000/

*Conner B. Carrico*  
Notary

My Commission Expires March 31, 2001.



## News: CPD Announces Candidate Selection Criteria, Sites and Dates for 2000 Debates

### MEDIA ADVISORY

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 6, 2000 -- Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) co-chairmen Paul G. Kirk, Jr. and Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr. today announced the candidate selection criteria to be used in the 2000 general election debates as well as the dates and sites for the debates.

Kirk and Fahrenkopf noted that after each of the last three general elections, the CPD had undertaken a thorough review of the candidate selection criteria used in that year's debates. After extensive study, the CPD has adopted a three-part standard for 2000 which is detailed in the attached document. "The approach we announce today is both clear and predictable," Kirk and Fahrenkopf said.

The CPD co-chairmen also announced four dates and sites for the 2000 debates:

- First presidential debate: Tuesday, October 3, John F. Kennedy Library and the University of Massachusetts, Boston, MA
- Vice presidential debate: Thursday, October 5, Centre College, Danville, KY
- Second presidential debate: Wednesday, October 11, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC
- Third presidential debate: Tuesday, October 17, Washington University in St. Louis, MO
- Madison, WI and St. Petersburg, FL have been selected as alternate sites.

Established in 1987, the nonpartisan, nonprofit CPD sponsored and produced the 1988, 1992, and 1996 general election debates. The CPD also undertakes research and partners with educational and public service organizations to promote citizen participation in the electoral process. In 2000, the CPD, with McNeil/Lehrer Productions, will produce "Debating our Destiny," a two-hour PBS special featuring interviews with participants in presidential debates since 1976.

The CPD intends to make extensive use of the Internet in its 2000 educational efforts, building on its 1996 voter outreach program, DebateWatch '96. Details of the CPD's Internet activities, which will be supported by corporate and nonprofit entities specializing in interactive application of the Internet, will be announced in the next several weeks. Background information on the CPD's mission, history and educational projects is available on its website: [www.debates.org](http://www.debates.org). The CPD will collaborate with the Freedom Channel in its work.



**COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES'  
NONPARTISAN CANDIDATE SELECTION CRITERIA  
FOR 2000 GENERAL ELECTION DEBATE PARTICIPATION**

**A. Introduction**

The mission of the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates (the "CPD") is to ensure, for the benefit of the American electorate, that general election debates are held every four years between the leading candidates for the offices of President and Vice President of the United States. The CPD sponsored a series of such debates in each of the past three general elections, and has begun the planning, preparation, and organization of a series of nonpartisan debates among leading candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency in the 2000 general election. As in prior years, the CPD's voter educational activities will be conducted in accordance with all applicable legal requirements, including regulations of the Federal Election Commission that require that debate sponsors extend invitations to debate based on the application of "pre-established, objective" criteria.

The goal of the CPD's debates is to afford the members of the public an opportunity to sharpen their views, in a focused debate format, of those candidates from among whom the next President and Vice President will be selected. In the last two elections, there were over one hundred declared candidates for the Presidency, excluding those seeking the nomination of one of the major parties. During the course of the campaign, the candidates are afforded many opportunities in a great variety of forums to advance their candidacies. In order to most fully and fairly to achieve the educational purposes of its debates, the CPD has developed nonpartisan, objective criteria upon which it will base its decisions regarding selection of the candidates to participate in its 2000 debates. The purpose of the criteria is to identify those candidates who have achieved a level of electoral support such that they realistically are considered to be among the principal rivals for the Presidency.

In connection with the 2000 general election, the CPD will apply three criteria to each declared candidate to determine whether that candidate qualifies for inclusion in one or more of CPD's debates. The criteria are (1) constitutional eligibility, (2) ballot access, and (3) electoral support. All three criteria must be satisfied before a candidate will be invited to debate.

**B. 2000 Nonpartisan Selection Criteria**

The CPD's nonpartisan criteria for selecting candidates to participate in its 2000 general election presidential debates are:

### 1. Evidence of Constitutional Eligibility

The CPD's first criterion requires satisfaction of the eligibility requirements of Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution. The requirements are satisfied if the candidate:

- a. is at least 35 years of age;
- b. is a Natural Born Citizen of the United States and a resident of the United States for fourteen years; and
- c. is otherwise eligible under the Constitution.

### 2. Evidence of Ballot Access

The CPD's second criterion requires that the candidate qualify to have his/her name appear on enough state ballots to have at least a mathematical chance of securing an Electoral College majority in the 2000 general election. Under the Constitution, the candidate who receives a majority of votes in the Electoral College (at least 270 votes), regardless of the popular vote, is elected President.

### 3. Indicators of Electoral Support

The CPD's third criterion requires that the candidate have a level of support of at least 15% (fifteen percent) of the national electorate as determined by five selected national public opinion polling organizations, using the average of those organizations' most recent publicly reported results at the time of the determination.

## C. Application of Criteria

The CPD's determination with respect to participation in the CPD's first-scheduled debate will be made after Labor Day 2000, but sufficiently in advance of the first-scheduled debate to allow for orderly planning. Invitations to participate in the vice-presidential debate will be extended to the running mates of each of the presidential candidates qualifying for participation in the CPD's first presidential debate. Invitations to participate in the second and third of the CPD's scheduled presidential debates will be based upon satisfaction of the same multiple criteria prior to each debate.

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## *Office of the Federal Register*

### LIST OF STATES AND VOTES

*Total: 538; Majority Needed to Elect: 270*

ALABAMA - 9	MONTANA - 3
ALASKA - 3	NEBRASKA - 5
ARIZONA - 8	NEVADA - 4
ARKANSAS - 6	NEW HAMPSHIRE - 4
CALIFORNIA - 54	NEW JERSEY - 15
COLORADO - 8	NEW MEXICO - 5
CONNECTICUT - 8	NEW YORK - 33
DELAWARE - 3	NORTH CAROLINA - 14
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA - 3	NORTH DAKOTA - 3
FLORIDA - 25	OHIO - 21
GEORGIA - 13	OKLAHOMA - 8
HAWAII - 4	OREGON - 7
IDAHO - 4	PENNSYLVANIA - 23
ILLINOIS - 22	RHODE ISLAND - 4
INDIANA - 12	SOUTH CAROLINA - 8
IOWA - 7	SOUTH DAKOTA - 3
KANSAS - 6	TENNESSEE - 11
KENTUCKY - 8	TEXAS - 32
LOUISIANA - 9	UTAH - 5
MAINE - 4	VERMONT - 3
MARYLAND - 10	VIRGINIA - 13
MASSACHUSETTS - 12	WASHINGTON - ..

B

## The Consultant Corps by Larry J. Sabato

### An Article Review by Charles E. Cruce

Last Update: March 6, 1997

Larry Sabato is an election analyst and a Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs at the University of Virginia. He has authored eighteen books, *The Rise of Political Consultants* being one, which the article "The Consultant Corps" is derived. He is widely regarded as the leading analyst of U.S. political trends in higher education and is often seen on such television shows as "Night Line", "Face the Nation", "Larry King Live", and many other national current affairs programs.

Political consultants are defined as campaign professionals who are engaged in the provision of advice and services (such as polling, media creation, and direct mail fund raising, to name a few) to candidates, their campaigns and other political committees. Sabato claims that political consultants determine referenda, initiatives, bond issues, and their firms are supported by many PACs or Political action committees (Sabato, 1981).

Sabato contends that with all this power to decide which issues should be allowed on the agenda or discussed and with such a broad spectrum of control, they have very little accountability with the public, politics or American democracy. Political consultants must only answer to their client (candidate) and they are independent of any political party in many cases. Political consultants have, in actuality, few enemies which can do them harm. The candidates do not want to bash any consultant for several reasons. First, as David Mayhew concluded by claiming that members of congress were, "single minded seekers of reelection" (Mayhew, 1974), political incumbents keep in contact with and ask advice of their consultant or consultants continually. Secondly, the candidate/politician will more than likely have to face this consultant from another side of the fence, so to speak, if he is not retained and /or in good relations with his past or present consultant.

The mass media is also an ally of the political consultant. Political consultants serve as expert sources of information and insight for political reporters, and these perceived election experts are rewarded an uncritical press and many complementing headlines (Sabato, 1981). With this in mind, it is easy to see how powerful political consultants are and why many PACs support many consulting firms, but why are political consultants needed and what exactly do they do?

Political consultants are a necessity for any politician who hopes to gain a political office and remain in that position or to move up the ladder in the political arena because campaigns have become so complex that most politicians do not feel that those who are in their circle of supporters have the ability or tools necessary for them to lead the campaign, so they hire a professional consultant to help the politician gain office. Political consultants can aide the politician in many ways. They survey the constituency of the politician and make issue decisions, arrange voter turnout, fund raising activities, damage control when necessary, advertising, marketing, and many other functions necessary to assure the politician a successful outcome on election day.

Politicians feel they cannot keep or obtain their job without the aide of consultants. The campaigns

<http://www.tamucc.edu/~whatley/PADM5302/theo36b.htm>

5/7/00

are long and difficult and candidates need someone or a group to organize, control, research and evaluate the process. Politicians do not have the experience or time to perform these functions on their own and hope to be successful in their campaign. Every candidate needs a consultant if for no other reason than that everyone else has them.

Not all a consultant does is good, however. Many consultants have been accused of peddling influence, acts of deception and trickery, and many financial improprieties. They have also added to the length of campaigns, inflated the cost of campaigns, and narrowed the focus of campaigns by emphasizing personality over issues. Many consultants persuade candidates to take a view on an issue which is not their own in order to gain support of a particular faction or PAC (Sabato, 1981).

Historically, political consultants are born of the concept of public relations which was developed by business interests prior to the New Deal Era as a way of quieting criticism and developing a positive image in the public's eye. Government bought into this belief during the New Deal which prompted many state and local governments along with other public agencies and not for profit agencies to follow suit (Sabato, 1981).

Sabato does not believe that political consultants are a bad group of individuals. On the contrary, he states that most consultants are hardworking, intelligent, very articulate, and also very lucky at some times (Sabato, 1981). What concerns Sabato is that political consultants are a very powerful player in the political and policy process, yet they have no one to whom they are directly responsible other than their client, and then that accountability is measured in the successful election and retention of his client in his office of choice. Sabato believes that electoral politics is the foundation of any democratic society, and the important actors in that political arena must be scrutinized in some fashion.

There is an organization to which political consultants must belong, the American Association of Political Consultants. Members claim that regular conferences and education have improved the profession of political consultants. The current code of ethics that members must agree to are vague and unenforceable from a practical point of view. It includes some of the following points:

1. I shall not indulge in any activity which would corrupt or degrade the practice of political campaigning.
2. I shall treat my colleagues and clients with respect and never intentionally injure their professional or personal reputation.
3. I shall respect the confidence of my client and not reveal confidential or private information obtained during our professional relationship.
4. I will use no appeal to voters which is based on racism or discrimination and will condemn those who use such practices. In turn, I will work for equal voting rights and privileges for all citizens.
5. I will refrain from false and misleading attacks on an opponent or his record.
6. I shall be honest in my relationship with the press and candidly answer questions when I have the authority to do so.
7. I shall not support any individual organization which resorts to practices forbidden by this code (Kees, Phillips, 1996).

What Sabato is attempting in his book is to make the public more aware of the political process and all the players involved in the process. It is ultimately the public, the everyday "Joe" or "Susan" who has the power to make these political consultants responsible for their actions. Unfortunately, in the view of the politician, this power comes through the public having an awareness of the actions of

<http://www.tamucc.edu/~whatley/PADM5302/theo36b.htm> 5/7/00

their representative at all times throughout his term and not only during election time, when these savvy consultants are the most effective. The general public has a responsibility as a player in the political process and the policy process to hold their representative accountable for his actions which are theoretically the actions the majority of his constituency wish him to make. Being informed on the actions and where one's representative in government at every level stands on those issues and communicating opinions and thoughts on issues are the two most important actions the citizen has the responsibility to perform, next to voting of course, in the political process.

As I mentioned above, political consultants often turn election campaigns into a personality contest rather than an issue based campaign. In the 1996 Presidential election, the candidates discussed in detail their campaign processes and Gov. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee went so far as to say that the way on which he ran his campaign was the main reason to vote for him (Kolbert, Feb 1996).

Although personality is interesting and important when electing an official, especially the President of the United States, this should not take precedence over where this candidate stands on important issues to the community and the country. Character is important, because if we elect officials with suspect character, we cannot be surprised when policy is implemented on issues with which the popular public does not agree. But allowing candidates to skip the discussion of the issues is very irresponsible of the voting citizen. Only by listening to the candidates stand on the issues of importance to the citizenry and following the actions of the elected official once in office concerning these issues can the general population and the individual decide whether the politician/policy maker has character and can be trusted and held to his/her word.

In discussing the Republican candidates campaign tactics, Ray Strother, a campaign consultant watching from the Democratic side felt one of their errors was talking to much about the campaign process and not focusing on the issues. Strother stated, "It's the kind of thing we used to do behind closed doors at the American Association of Political Consultants", and "it's sort of like undressing in public" (Kolbert, Feb 1996). Is this an admission as to the type of behavior which is reinforced in the political consulting profession? If it is, as I suspect it to be, there are some changes which our electoral process should undertake to keep democracy alive and keep the playing field level between all the players. Political consultants can get away with whatever they want as long as politicians have no laws by which to abide in the campaign process and as long as the public allows for the continuance of unethical behavior.

With all this in mind, doesn't it seem time that lawmakers at every level of government work diligently and ethically to pass legislation which will clean up the campaign process and the policy making process by reforming the fund raising guidelines political parties and candidates must follow and make these guidelines enforceable? It is also time that all the players in the political and policy making process are held accountable for their actions so that our government can run more effectively and ethically as it was intended when this Great Democracy was created.

### Works Cited

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Jewish World Review Oct. 19, 1999 /9 Mar-Cheshvan 5760

*Arianna Huffington*

## World's Greatest Democracy?

<http://www.jewishworldreview.com> -- THE NEED FOR increasing citizen participation in our democracy has become a talking point for practically every presidential hopeful. But the only candidates in the race not just paying lip service are Republican John McCain and Democrat Bill Bradley. Their solutions are as different as their histories.

McCain proposes to heal the "cynicism and pessimism, particularly among young people ... by calling them to causes. They tell me there are no great causes. And I say it isn't war necessarily. Wherever there's an elderly person that needs shelter, there's a great cause. Wherever there's a hungry child, there's a great cause. Wherever there are people killing each other like in East Timor today, there is a great cause."

Bradley proposes to address the plummeting drop in voter turnout -- 26 percent since 1966 -- by easing the voting rules, from same-day registration to vote-by-mail.

Of course, McCain is right: there is nothing like a great cause to stir civic involvement. "The problems of American democracy and participation," said Curtis Gans, director of the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, "don't lie with procedure, but with motivation. Given the opportunity to choose what to do with their weekends, most voters would prefer to go fishing."

Only a catalytic leader or cataclysmic event can increase motivation. But since we can't create those circumstances in the lab, we can in the meantime go along with Bradley.

A new voters' rights movement is indeed needed, both to make



voting easier and to open up the political process to those outside the entrenched two-party system. Despite a surge in voter registration in the '90s, fueled by the Motor Voter law -- there was a net increase of 5.5 million Americans registered to vote from 1994 to 1998 -- voter turnout continues to decline. In the 1998 election, 72.4 million citizens voted, and 115.5 million eligible voters sat out the election. That 36 percent was the lowest since 1942, when millions of Americans were overseas fighting in World War II.

History shows that in the 19th century, push factors such as poll taxes and literacy tests drove down participation. In South Carolina, for example, turnout fell from 83.7 percent in 1880 to 18 percent in 1900.

So today's reformers hope to introduce pull factors that could drive turnout up. In 1998, when Jesse Ventura's supporters realized that there was a late surge in voter interest in their candidate for governor, they scrambled to find a way to turn that excitement into votes. "It was really good news to discover that many of the procedural roadblocks had been removed," said Bill Hillsman, Ventura's media consultant. "Minnesota is definitely ahead of the game in terms of voters' rights." Only five other states have same-day voter registration: Idaho, Maine, New Hampshire, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

The other most-often-proposed reforms are early voting (which extends the election period from a single day to up to three weeks), weekend voting, no-fault absentee voting (which allows balloting by mail for any reason) and vote-by-mail (an institutionalized form of absentee voting).

Of course, once it's easier to vote, the problem becomes finding someone worth voting for. That's where questions of ballot access and debate access come into play. Ballot access requirements vary dramatically from state to state. Want to run a candidate for president from a new third party? Louisiana and Colorado require only a \$500 fee. Oklahoma and Alabama require the signatures of about 2 percent of the states' registered voters.

The importance of opening access to debates was illustrated in 1998 by Ventura's participation in the Minnesota gubernatorial debates,

which propelled him to victory. The presence of Ross Perot in the 1992 presidential debates helped him win 18.7 percent of the vote; his absence in 1996 was a contributing factor to his getting only 8.4 percent of the vote.

As George Stephanopoulos put it, "the debates were a metaphor for the campaign. We wanted the debates to be a non-event." And indeed, 100 million fewer people tuned in than did in 1992, making it the lowest-watched general-election presidential debate in television history.



Debate access promises to be a particularly thorny problem this election cycle, with the increased interest in third parties. The Commission on Presidential Debates has become the living embodiment of our political duopoly -- formed by the two parties, chaired by two former party chairmen and funded by the same corporate interests that lavishly support the two-party structure. Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas), a former third-party member himself, has introduced a bill that would make it possible for any presidential candidate on the ballot in at least 40 states to participate in the debates. But the commission is likely once again to try to shut out other voices and turn the first debate of the new millennium into another non-event.

While reformers in the United States rack their brains for new ways to drag voters to the polls, East Timor recently showed what happens when people are motivated to bring about change through the ballot box. An astounding 98.6 percent turned out at the polls, risking being gunned down on the way there. Meanwhile, back home, with two-thirds of eligible voters so disgusted with our politics that they don't even bother to vote, we risk becoming the greatest democracy on earth in name only.

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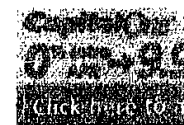
During election time, we're subject to poll after poll after poll. And the pundits will be tossing around terms like "margin of error" and "statistical dead-heat". But, do these journalists really understand how statistical polling works? This article is intended to demystify the process and explain some of these terms. For more background on statistical subjects, see [here](#).

A poll should be conducted in a very specific way in order to have any accuracy of results. Let's pretend we're conducting a political poll. How would we design it?

First, we need a "random sample". That means, we sample the population we want to study by picking random people out of it. How many? That depends on how accurate we want to be; the more people, the more accurate. However, it is not a linear relationship, in other words, there is a law of diminishing returns after which point getting more participants doesn't really help the accuracy that much. I'll be more specific as to how many people should participate later on. The word "population" in statistics means something too - it means the group we want to study. In this case, it is voters - since the opinions of non-voters have no bearing on the election. Technically, we have to take a "list" of voters in the entire USA and pick random people off of it. This is obviously impractical. We'll have to settle for something else. Generally, random phone lists are generated and people

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are called from that list.

Let's be clear: by settling for this form of selection we are giving up a great deal! First, we are not random, because voters without phones or who are not listed in the computer are not included. You might think this is a small point, but in fact, it can have a great impact on the numbers. Most polls include only 1000 or less people (and most polls done by news organizations include as few as 300). Missing even 3 people who would vote differently can affect the results by 1% or more. And one has to assume that voters without phone or who elect to delist themselves probably share socio-economic aspects that would slant their vote one way or another. In other words, we've left out a non-randomly selected group from the poll.

Now, we call people on the list. What should the first question be? "Are you going to vote in the election?" Sometimes this is asked, sometimes not. If not, we have completely mixed the population of interest with the population we're not interested in. What about people who hang up? Deciding not to participate in the study is called "self-selection" (it could also mean people opt to participate, but in these cases, we worry more about those who do not participate). Is that worrisome? Yes. Self-selection is a non-random process. Why are they not participating? Are they too busy? Too fed up with the political process? Angry at the media/politicians? It's not difficult to imagine that people who opt out of participating may be non-random in terms of their political views. This skews the process too. However, there's not much you can do about it, except try to ensure that a similar person (socio-economically) is chosen to replace the opt-out. However, in news polls this is almost never done.

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So, now the questions. This is the trickiest part of the polling process. Badly phrased questions can really cause skewed results. For more information on that subject see this [public interest polling site](#). For example, forcing someone to pick a candidate - even if they have no opinion - is completely meaningless. Often, you'll see a "Don't Know" answer published in a poll. That's a good thing. Sometimes, however, polls will force people to pick one or the other. That makes people answer in fairly random ways. There are studies about random selection. Some people will simply choose the first name they hear, some will choose the last. Some will choose on other completely baffling criteria. ("I had a brother named George so....") The fact of the matter is that these answers are bogus and thus the results are skewed too.

A more dangerous practice has been used by some political organizations to get skewed results on purpose. Back in 1996, a political organization passed out a poll with the following type of question: "Do you support the President's attempt to block Republicans from bankrupting Medicare and eliminating seniors' choice of medical care?" Yes or No?

Well, that one is a little obvious. But it shows the point I'm making. Ask questions in a slightly different way, and you skew the results. Here's another more subtle example. There

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are two questions:

1. Do you consider the environment important? Yes or No
2. If you answered yes, how important is the administration's attempt to protect wilderness areas in the west for future generations? Very Important, Important, Less Important, Not Important.

The trick here is the first question. Many people will answer Yes to question 1 even though they may disagree with the administration's wilderness program. However, after committing to the environment very few people will answer Not Important to question 2. Studies show that asking question 1 than question 2 results in higher percentages of Very Important and Important than does when asking question 2 alone.

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## The Statistics Behind Political Polls - Margin of Error

Now for the math! (You knew it was coming.) What is the margin of error? ([Here's](#) another really good article about this.)

Statistical numbers are never "on the nose". They always provide a little leeway on both sides. When a poll says "57% of people support George Bush for President". What they are really saying is that their 57% of their sample said they would vote for George Bush. However, what does that mean about the population in general?

This is where the statistics comes in. Let's talk about samples and populations. The sample is the group who was surveyed. The population is the group of interest (voters). There is a sample proportion (57%) and there is a population proportion (unknown). The population proportion is the exact figure of absolutely everyone who would vote from George Bush. This is the number polls are trying to estimate. We can't say what that number is. However, what we can say is that with a certain confidence level, the real number falls with a certain percentage of the sample proportion. That percentage is called the margin of error. [More on generalizing population information from sample information.](#)

For example, let's say we conduct a survey among 350

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people. 195 of those people say they'll vote for George Bush. That's about 55.7%. The margin of error is 5.2% using a 95% confidence interval (we'll discuss the formula later). What that means is that we're 95% sure that the "real" number - the population proportion - is somewhere between 50.5% and 60.9%. (55.7%  $\pm$  5.2%). That doesn't mean the real number is absolutely in that range, just that we're 95% sure it is. There is a 5% chance that we blew it (in our sample) and got a really skewed sample and the real number is somewhere else.

Okay, so where did I come up with those numbers? Well, the formula is:

$$\text{margin of error} = z \sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n}}$$

where p is the proportion measured, n is the sample size, and z is a z-score - the normal score for the confidence level chosen. You can look up z-scores in a normal distribution table, but here are a few for reference:

Confidence Level	Z-score
90%	1.645
95%	1.96
97%	2.17
98%	2.33
99%	2.58
99.5%	2.81

(Note for sticklers: this assumes a two-tailed distribution and confidence interval)

[Here's](#) a more detailed discussion of this calculation.

So when a news organization says two people are in a statistical dead-heat, what does that mean? Well, consider another scenario. Assume that George Bush only had 52% of the vote and his opponent (assume a two person race) had the other 48%. With a margin of error of about 5%, George Bush could be as low as 47% and his opponent could be as high as 53%. In other words, George Bush could be behind

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for all we know. Results that could go either way are called statistical dead-heats.

Hopefully this information will make you a more informed political observer. I listen very closely to the information that news organizations provide when reporting poll results. Generally, I question them. I hope you do now too!

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## THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER For The People & The Press

### POLL ANALYSIS: March 4, 1999

#### *Does an early lead in the polls usually hold up?*

A stream of candidate announcements and polls showing Texas Governor George W. Bush leading Vice President Al Gore have spurred interest in the 2000 presidential contest. But with the nominating conventions still more than 16 months away, what do these early polls mean for would-be nominees?

A look back at nearly 40 years of early primary polls suggests that the Republican front-runner is a good bet to capture the nomination. The same cannot be said of the first horse in the Democratic pack.

In six open Republican contests since 1960, the early front-runner has held on to win the party nod five times.<sup>(1)</sup> But in six open Democratic contests since 1960, the early leader has won the nomination just once. That was Vice President Walter F. Mondale in 1984.

While this may be good news for Bush, it is not necessarily bad news for Al Gore. The Democratic front-runners who did not win the nomination had not been vice presidents. Further, they were not usually blocked by lack of voter support. One decided against a run, one withdrew in the face of scandal, and one dropped out in the wake of a now legendary dirty trick.

#### Republican Nomination Contests

	Early Front-runner	Party Nominee
1996	Bob Dole	Bob Dole
1988	George Bush	George Bush
1980	Reagan	Reagan
1968	Nixon	Nixon
1964	Rockefeller	Goldwater
1960	Nixon	Nixon

#### Democratic Nomination Contests

	Early Front-runner	Party Nominee
1992	Cuomo	Clinton
1988	Hart	Dukakis
1984	Mondale	Mondale
1976	Kennedy	Carter
1972	Muskie	McGovern
1960	Stevenson	Kennedy

#### *Why do Elizabeth Dole and George W. Bush look strong, when the GOP looks weak?*

While Gore may be a good bet to win the nomination, recent nationwide polls find him trailing Bush and former Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Dole among registered voters. And a recent Pew Research Center survey found more respondents saying they would consider voting for the two GOP front-runners than for the Democratic Vice President (72% for Bush and 64% for Dole, compared to 52% for Gore). These are surprising findings given Clinton's 64% approval rating and the fact that the Democratic party has a better national image (58% favorable) than the Republicans (44% favorable).

Gore's standing in the polls is reminiscent of former Vice President George Bush 12 years ago when

he ran behind several Democratic contenders at this point.<sup>(2)</sup> But Vice President Bush's weakness in the polls then may have reflected mixed views of the administration, while Vice President Gore's position in the polls today may have more to do with his own image problems.

Gore's favorability ratings today are significantly below those of Vice President Bush at this point in the Reagan administration. Gore is regarded favorably by 58% of the public today, compared to the 67% who had a favorable opinion of Bush in April 1987. Moreover, still stinging from the Iran-Contra scandal, President Reagan's job approval rating was a paltry 47% in 1987, compared to President Clinton's lofty approval score today.

Tepid response to Gore among many Independents and even among Democrats is leading a significant number of these voters to consider voting for George W. Bush or Elizabeth Dole in 2000. Nearly half of Independents (49%) and 16% of Democrats say they have ruled out voting for Gore. In contrast, 76% of Independents and 53% of Democrats say they would consider voting for Bush. The numbers for Dole are nearly as high: 69% of Independents and 49% of Democrats would consider voting for her.

Rating the Administration		
	April 1987	Feb 1999
Presidential job approval...	%	%
Approve	47	64
Disapprove	44	30
Don't know	9	6
	100	100
	April 1987	Dec 1998
Opinion of Vice President...	%	%
Favorable	67	58
Unfavorable	26	33
Don't know	7	9
	100	100

#### *How well did the independent statewide polls do in November?*

The 1998 state election polls should put to rest the criticism that the polls consistently underestimate Republican strength. Last year, more than two-thirds of the independent polls reviewed by the Pew Research Center *overestimated* the Republican vote.

This failure led to some criticism of the state polls, since several national polls caught the Democratic surge the weekend before the election. But despite a consistent pattern of underestimating the Democratic vote, the state polls were for the most part accurate: well over half of those reviewed correctly forecast the elections.

To get a picture of what the polls showed and why they may have gone wrong, the Pew Research Center gathered information about 34 independent polls conducted for the news media in key Senate and gubernatorial races. All of the polls were published within 10 days of the election, and only races that were close or predicted to be close were considered.

Looking at the spread -- that is the difference between the Democratic and the Republican candidates -- 10 of the 34 polls missed the mark. They missed the spread by over 8 percentage points, more than the margin of sampling error for these polls. Eight of these polls also missed the victor. Another 14 polls missed the spread by between 7 and 4 percentage points, a fair showing, and 10 were on the money, calling the spread within 2 percentage points.

Polls in Competitive 1998 Statewide Races				
Race	Poll	Predicted Rep.-Dem.	Actual Rep.-Dem.	N
MIN Gov	MIN Star-Tribune	30-35-27	34-28-37	1007
GA Gov	Atl. Jml.-Const.	45-40	44-53	709
GA Gov	Mason-Dixon	46-43	44-53	809
IA Gov	Mason-Dixon	47-42	47-52	803
SC Gov	Mason-Dixon	46-44	45-53	806
IA Gov	Des Moines Reg.	47-43	47-52	800
NY Sen	Zogby Int'l	41-41	45-54	1200
MIN Gov	St. Cloud State	32-32-27	34-28-37	450
MD Gov	Mason-Dixon	45-49	44-56	828

No identifiable methodological patterns emerge to separate the better polls from the rest. Nearly all had adequate sample sizes for an individual state (600 or more) and almost all looked at likely voters. Almost none report weighting their sample by party identification (which fluctuates) rather than demographics. And while over half did not ask follow-up questions to undecided voters, pushing them to make a choice between the candidates, this variable turns up just as often on the accurate and inaccurate polls.

The only pattern that does emerge is partisan. The spread on only five state polls underestimated Republican strength, while the spread in 26 of the 34 underestimated Democratic strength. Eight of the 10 polls that fell outside of the margin of error fell into the latter category, and the other two involved the three-way Minnesota gubernatorial contest won by Independent Jesse Ventura.

But the reasons the polls missed the Democratic surge are not clear. In some instances, estimates of Democratic voter turnout may have been off. Of the eight that missed the race outcome by a large margin, four involved elections in which black voter turnout was slightly higher than in the last midterm election: the Georgia, South Carolina, and Maryland gubernatorial contests. Without an African-American candidate or ballot issue that can boost minority voter turnout, the pre-election polls may have estimated that black voter turnout would be like the 1994 elections. This proved wrong in some states, as Democratic Party groups made a major get-out-the-vote effort among blacks in 1998.

In other places, voters who made up their minds late appear to have gone Democratic. Two of the polls that were wrong involved the Iowa gubernatorial contest, won by Democrat Tom Vilsack. Both Mason-Dixon and the Des Moines Register showed the Republican leading the week before the election, but polls throughout the summer and fall showed a trend that hinted at a Democratic upset. The Republican was below 50% in both polls and had not gained any ground during the fall, while the Democrat steadily climbed 20 percentage points in this time.

The remaining two polls involve the only two Senate races that state polls missed: New York and California. Zogby International predicted a dead heat in New York; the Democrat won handily. In California, Mason-Dixon forecast a razor-thin Democratic margin; in fact, the Democrat won comfortably. The starkly partisan tone of the two contests and the relatively large minority populations in each state might account for part of the mistake. But other polls conducted around the same time did call these two races accurately, and the two pollsters who missed the races accurately forecast the winner in other close contests.

CA Sen	Mason-Dixon	43-45	43-53	809
AR Sen	Mason-Dixon	36-56	42-55	810
IL Gov	Mason-Dixon	48-37	51-47	813
MD Gov	Wash Post	44-49	44-56	919
IL Sen	Zogby Int'l	42-45	51-47	700
OH Gov	Ohio Poll	53-42	50-45	1103
NY Sen	Mason-Dixon	43-46	45-54	808
MA Gov	Boston Herald	47-38	51-47	402
NY Sen	Blum & Weprin	42-46	45-54	662
WI Sen	Market Shares	46-43	48-50	600
NC Sen	Mason-Dixon	44-43	47-51	827
CO Gov	Mason-Dixon	45-41	49-49	831
CO Gov	Denver Post	46-42	49-49	500
MD Gov	Potomac Inc.	44-52	44-56	1200
IL Sen	Mason-Dixon	49-41	51-47	813
MO Sen	Zogby Int'l	47-36	53-44	600
OH Gov	Mason-Dixon	49-42	50-45	815
NV Sen	Mason-Dixon	45-47	48-48	817
KY Sen	Louisville Cour-Jml	43-44	50-49	589
KY Sen	Mason-Dixon	45-46	50-49	823
CA Sen	Field Poll	42-51	43-53	678
NY Sen	Quinnipiac	42-50	45-54	584
MA Gov	Boston Globe	46-41	51-47	400
SC Sen	Mason-Dixon	44-49	46-52	806
OH Gov	Harris & Assoc.	44-39	50-45	550

\* For Minnesota governor's race, third figure listed is for Independent candidate Jesse Ventura. Polling and election results from *Hatkins, Cook Political Report*, and polling organizations.

<http://www.people-press.org/99watch1.htm>

5/9/00

REPUBLICAN IN NATIONAL POLLS TAKEN MORE THAN A YEAR BEFORE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. Questions about Republican nominees were typically asked of Republicans and Independents who lean Republican; questions about Democratic nominees were typically asked of Democrats and Independents who lean Democratic. Based on past surveys by the Pew Research Center, the Gallup Poll, and CBS News/*New York Times*.

2. For example, Gary Hart led Bush, 47%-38%, in an April 1987 Times-Mirror survey.



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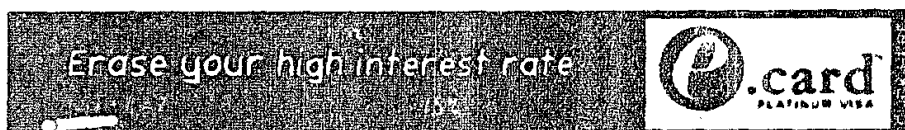


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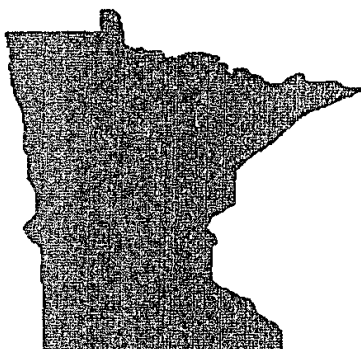


## IC Politics - Minnesota

Updated November 5, 1998

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### Winner

Jesse Ventura (Reform)

Please [join](#) the IC discussion on the Minnesota Governor's race at the bottom of this page. Give us your favorite, analyze the race, or simply discuss the issues on our interactive bulletin board.

**Field Reporters**  
 Bill Ballenger  
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 Joseph C. Dolman  
 Donna Ladd  
 Scot C. Dolph  
 Tom Macquardt  
 Jim McLean  
 Tim Nickens  
 Suzi Porter  
 Sean Rolly  
 Steve Scott  
 Barbara Serrano  
 Rachel Stassen-Berger

## Results

In a rare third-party upset and the biggest surprise of the night, Reform Party candidate Jesse "The Body" Ventura, a former professional wrestler who had little money for campaigning, outlasted the two establishment candidates in Minnesota's gubernatorial race: Democrat Hubert H. "Skip" Humphrey III, whose family is legendary in Minnesota, and Republican Norm Coleman, the mayor of St. Paul.

Voters rewarded Ventura for his populist rhetoric and non-traditional campaign style. He scored particularly well with younger voters. This, coupled with voters' general disdain for career politicians, catapulted Ventura to the state's top job. Here are the nearly complete but unofficial returns:

### Election Returns

Jesse Ventura (Rfm) 745,282 37% (WON)

Hubert Humphrey  
(D) 565,388 28%

Norm Coleman (R) 693,360 35%

Not only did Ventura win, but Humphrey (D), the general favorite before the election, finished a distant third, with just slightly more than a quarter of the votes.

## IC Articles

### Minnesota Governor: Chasing the Farm Vote

Rachel Stassen-Berger explains why the statehouse matters to farmers.

### Minnesota Governor: Skipping Toward Victory

Rachel Stassen-Berger analyzes the Democratic primary in Minnesota.

**Minnesota Governor: The Education Candidates**

Everyone is talking education in Minnesota, and Rachel Stassen-Berger explains why.

**Minnesota Governor: A Volatile Mix of Politics and Sports**

Rachel Stassen-Berger analyzes all the baseball and hockey chatter.

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Rachel Stassen-Berger ponders the implications of an electorate tuned to the Internet.

**Minnesota Governor: It Takes More Than a Name**

Rachel Stassen-Berger reports on what Minnesota voters think of their version of *My Three Sons*.

**Major Candidates**

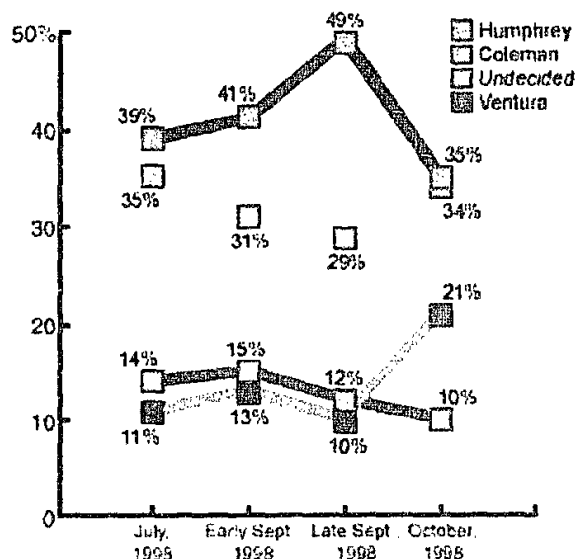
**Norm Coleman**  
(R)



**Hubert H. Humphrey III** (D)



**Jesse Ventura**  
(Reform)

**Polls**

Source: Mpls Star Tribune. Last poll date: 10/5/98

- **Humphrey takes wide lead after the primary**  
Link to *Star Tribune* polling information.

**Major Developments**

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## Jesse "The Body" Ventura plays the spoiler in Minnesota gov. race

ST. PAUL, Minnesota (October 27) -- If Republican Norm Coleman and Democratic Hubert H. "Skip" Humphrey III thought their race for the Minnesota governor's seat would be a traditional two party contest, they were sadly mistaken. A third party spoiler has come from behind to shake up the race, just like he use to shake up the world of professional wrestling.

Much like the Reform party's founder, Ross Perot, did in the 1992 presidential race, Jesse "The Body" Ventura has used his Reform party nomination -- and improbable popularity in the polls -- to influence the close race between the two major party candidates.

"You know, many people know me, probably from the radio; they know me from my wrestling days," Ventura says.

Ventura spent many years in professional wrestling. He's also acted in movies like "Running Man." He was a Navy SEAL, a talk show host and mayor of a Minneapolis suburb. But wrestling is what made him famous.



Jesse "The Body" Ventura

### VIDEO

Body slam politics in Minnesota Governor's race (10-27-98) Real: 28K | 56K Windows Media: 28K | 56K

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[Transcript: Inside Politics interviews Jesse Ventura \(10-27-98\)](#)

[Former pro wrestler enlivens Minnesota governor's race \(10-01-98\)](#)

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[CQ Profile: Norm Coleman](#)

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Now he's making a political statement.

"You have the choice of electing two career politicians, it is their career," Ventura tells a large classroom full of students. "Or you can elect a person from the private sector."

Ventura's protest campaign has particularly eroded Humphrey's support -- an ironic twist since it was Humphrey who refuses to appear in debates with Coleman unless Ventura was invited.

**COMMUNITY**

[Post your opinions on the November races](#)

# **MINNESOTA GOVERNOR POLL Oct. 15-18**

**Humphrey 35%  
Coleman 34%  
Ventura 21%**

Source: Minneapolis Star  
Tribune/KMSP-TV  
Margin of Error: +/- 3.5% pts

The latest major poll shows Humphrey in a statistical dead heat with Coleman and Ventura has gone from off-the-wall, to 21 percent.

Maybe it's his radio ads and their political counter-culture message. Up until now, Ventura hasn't been able to afford TV commercials. But on the radio he sure makes people listen.

"I believe Minnesota should return the entire \$4 billion tax surplus to the hard working people who paid it in. I believe Led Zeppelin and the Rolling Stones are two of the greatest rock bands ever," Ventura says in one of his radio ads.



Norm Coleman

Now that the two major party candidates are paying attention to Ventura they're vying to attract his supporters, arguing that the wrestling ring is no training ground for the state capitol where the political wrestling is very real

Meanwhile, Humphrey and Coleman also focus on their traditional campaigns. Humphrey, the state attorney general and the son of the Minnesota political legend is carrying on the liberal family traditions.

"What the state government is going to do in the next four years is going to affect very dramatically your life," Humphrey says.

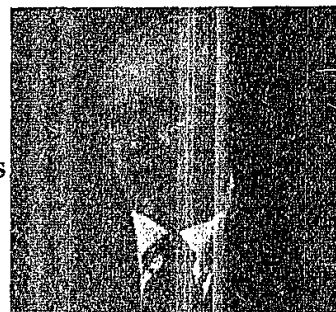
Coleman, the mayor of St. Paul is a Democrat-turned Republican who has campaigned with the likes of Jack Kemp, and sounds like him.

"When you cut taxes, you stimulate investment, you stimulate growth, you stimulate opportunity," Coleman says.



As for Ventura, he's no longer just a sideshow.

"Hopefully I won't get in trouble today speaking like I did yesterday," Ventura tells Kiwanis Club meeting a day after a report claimed he had advocated legalized prostitution. Ventura insists a reporter had taken his words out of context.



"Skip" Humphrey

"I have to spend all week being politically correct," the anti-establishment Ventura says.

But being politically correct is precisely what Ventura has not been and caution may be the price of his success, trying to be establishment may be what ultimately allows one of the other candidates to slip out of Ventura's hammerlock.

CNN's Bob Franken contributed to this report.

## MORE STORIES:

Tuesday, October 27, 1998

- Poll: Bush, Gore early front-runners for 2000
- McDougal fiancé scolded over Whitewater mention
- Farmhand saw suspect with murdered state senator, heard 'pop'
- Burton asks FEC to review Democratic funds
- Bennett tried to protect Jones case information from Starr
- Women discuss Social Security
- Witness in Espy trial says she was asked to delete details from trip itinerary
- First lady celebrates 51st birthday
- Man in Clinton threat makes a plea

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- Democrats on the decline in Kentucky
- Feiger forces Democratic defections in Michigan governor's race
- Jesse "The Body" Ventura plays the spoiler in Minnesota gov. race
- S.C. Senate race pits old South against new
- Both parties eye no-incumbent races
- Paper: Democrats fighting over elections
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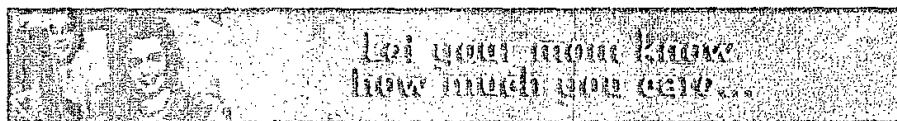
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## Political polls have role, but analysis can be misleading



Richard de Uriarte

The Arizona Republic  
Feb. 27, 2000

In the days prior to the New Hampshire primary, some presidential polls showed John McCain ahead in the Republican race. Others had him tied with Gov. George W. Bush.

McCain won by 18 points.

On the Friday before the South Carolina primary, two polls had Bush grabbing the advantage, while others called it a dead heat. The pundits suggested the turnout of crossover voters - Independents and Democrats - would be critical.

Bush won South Carolina by 11 percent. A huge turnout of Republicans was the deciding factor.

Such events raise a question: Why do newspapers run so many poll stories?

Actually, The Arizona Republic has - commendably, I think - become restrained in its use of polls. In a recent Page A2 letter to readers, presidential campaign editor Dave Wagner compared their usefulness to "a rear-view mirror in the rain."

We've taken precautions. In the public opinion surveys The Republic conducts, we usually include how the questions were worded, how many people were asked and what the margin of error is. That is valuable information.

Still, problems arise, usually as reporters and editors try to inject color and analysis into their stories. Sometimes journalists attach more significance to numbers than they deserve. When that happens, they mislead readers more than inform them.

Last October, for instance, the Phoenix-based Behavior Research Center conducted a poll of 502 voters. The results, according to Research Director Earl de Berge, showed the presidential race "in flux" in Arizona. Bush had lost an earlier double-digit lead. What's more, two-thirds of GOP voters admitted they might change their minds again.

But our news brief said: "George W. Bush and Sen. John McCain are in a statistical dead heat in Arizona." True, but irrelevant, not the real story.

A poll, remember, is a snapshot, a point in time. It doesn't predict the outcome of elections. It doesn't provide context or show a pattern unless compared with something else - another time, another place, another set of people.

A lot depends on the wording of the questions. Human beings often hold inchoate, even contradictory, opinions. Be careful about interpreting them, especially before issues have been vetted and thrashed out in public.

You get one answer if you ask: "If a president had an affair with a White House intern, lied to the American people about it and was impeached, should he resign for the good of the country?"

But "Should President Clinton be removed from office?" generated an entirely different response.

Problems occur outside politics, too. Last fall, we ran a front-page wire story lamenting the puny savings rate of American households. The median savings of American families was a paltry \$1,000. That looked pretty bad.

But the survey, sponsored by the Consumer Federation of America and financial services firm Primerica, excluded the value of home equity, private pensions and 401(k) retirement plans, precisely where millions of Americans count their savings. That illuminating piece of information was found in the 17th paragraph of a 18-inch story.

Wagner is right. Check who's paying for the poll before you

pay attention to it.

**Richard de Uriarte is the reader advocate for The Arizona Republic. He can be reached at (602) 444-8912 or by email at [reader.advocate@ArizonaRepublic.com](mailto:reader.advocate@ArizonaRepublic.com).**

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Excerpts from 'The Hosing of America' by Jack Koenig:

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In addition to the media and the Locksteppers, polling organizations and individual pollsters played an important role in the "Hosing of America". This should come as no surprise since several polling organizations already have a checkered past. It must be remembered that even if a polling organization has strict procedures in place to minimize manipulation, knowledgeable individuals can always circumvent the rules. The old axiom, "Figures Lie and Liars Figure" is something to remember when viewing polling results.

In Thomas E. Mahl's book, Desperate Deception, a situation is described in which World War II British agents successfully manufactured public opinion polls to help generate enthusiasm for an American peacetime draft. In unmasking this fraud, Mr. Mahl showed how these manufactured surveys, conducted by the Gallup Organization and others, were all done under the influence of dedicated interventionists and British Intelligence agents. Although one might argue this was "the patriotic thing to do" in that time frame, it raises the question of polling integrity itself. And if an organization or individual has a history of compromise, why would anyone think they wouldn't repeat it?

And repeat it they did! At least two, and possibly three serious breaches of polling integrity have come to light so far in the Zippergate fiasco.

In the first situation, a leading pollster has admitted to manufacturing poll results to achieve a desired result. On the August 19, 1998, CNN Moneyline show with Lou Dobbs, CNN polling director Keating Holland discussed how he manipulated Clinton's numbers upward to meet their expectations after plummeting from the Lewinsky affair. Holland's justification for this breach of polling integrity was that the question had been worded wrong and if different wording had been used, Clinton's numbers would have been higher!

In the second situation and on the same Moneyline show, USA Today Polling Editor Jim Norman acknowledged revising questions

to achieve "better" results. Norman defended his actions by stating "you try like the devil to get it right but every once in awhile you find out there's a better way to ask questions."

The above two examples bring the "Wording" game to the front burner. According to pollster Scott Rasmussen from Rasmussen Research ([www.portraitofamerica.com](http://www.portraitofamerica.com)), *"There are three parts to any good survey: design, interviewing, and analysis. For some reason, people who dislike polls often get concerned about the middle part which involves sample selection, response rates, etc. Ironically, this is the least problematic aspect of polling. Those who are concerned about polling should focus their attention on the wording and analysis of the results. If a polling firm or a media outlet won't let you see the question wording, you shouldn't trust the poll."*

In David Moore's 1995 book, The Superstars, pollster Louis Harris was quoted as writing in an internal memo: *"when designing a study, the analyst must know what he or she is after. The real world is biased, and you must present questions that way."* In Can You Trust Opinion Polls, author Claude R. Marx comments *"Harris said he makes sure there are an equal number of biased questions on both sides of an issue to ensure a balanced result."* "But", Marx concluded, *"there are sometimes different degrees of bias in the questions"*, indicating of course, that you can easily make one side more biased than the other. And as Herbert Asher describes in Polling And The Public, *"because the investigator has tremendous leeway in deciding how to frame questions about a particular subject, it is important to recognize that two ostensibly similar questions generated highly divergent results."* Both CNN's Keating Holland and USA Today's Jim Norman seem to have proven those remarks!

But all this should come as no surprise if history repeats itself. Going back a few years, other serious challenges to polling integrity have been unearthed. Consider the 1992 election cycle. In that campaign, an initial CNN poll showed Perot ahead by a sizable margin. Suddenly, and before Perot went schmuckypuck on everyone, his lead plummeted to the low teens and then into the single digits. Later investigation suggested this "drop" was the result of a change in the manner CNN selected its sample. Instead of

continuing to use all eligible voters (all adults) in their sample, ground rules were changed to include only registered voters. This effectively eliminated a large portion of the population... the disenchanted who may have very well have registered and voted for Perot.

In A Journalist's Guide to Public Opinion Polls, another 1992 situation is described in which additional changes in eligibility procedures dramatically altered the polls. In this example, the authors document how CNN's change from "eligible voter" to "most likely voter" in the latter days of the '92 campaign, impacted the Bush-Clinton numbers by a full six percentage points... overnight!

Still further manipulation of public opinion occurred in 1992 when the Gallup organization altered a crucial poll by allocating the five or six percentage points representing undecided voters to Clinton. This resulted in Gallup's final pre-election numbers as 49% Clinton, 37% Bush, and 14% Perot. Unfortunately for Gallup (and Bush), the actual percentages of 43-38-19 were closer to the unadjusted numbers. How many Bush voters stayed home because they thought it was futile to vote? We'll never know for sure, but chances are it would have made a difference!

In addition to outright hanky-panky, there are also challenges to the methods used in selecting polling samples. When one considers the cooperation rate (the number of individuals from a pool who agree to be included in a survey) is only 25% for overnight polls and 40%-45% for 4-5 day polls, one has to question the validity of the sample itself.

Further problems are introduced by individual pollsters. According to Herbert Asher, author of Polling and The Public, leading polling organizations rely mainly on middle aged women to conduct their polls. This is done because of a better response rate accorded female pollsters. In addition, pollsters are often paired with their own race in order to minimize the "I'll say what you want to hear" bias. However, by admitting that pollsters get the "I'll say what you want to hear" bias at all, they must admit it can occur even when race isn't a factor. This is especially important if previously mentioned psychological techniques such as the *Opinion*



***Triangle, the Bandwagon Effect and the Herd Mentality syndrome***  
have been put into play.

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# PERSPECTIVES

## What do political polls really tell us?

by David W. Rohde

*Rohde is a University Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Michigan State University, where he directs IPPSR's Political Institutions and Public Choice program. A nationally known scholar on American politics and Congress, Rohde writes extensively on American national elections for the academic world and is often quoted in the popular media. He is a principal investigator on the MSU State of the State Surveys that deal with elections and political issues.*

### ***Harnessing the power of knowledge for effective public policy***

The political season is again upon us, and we are being inundated by electoral polls of various kinds from many sources. My purpose here is to discuss some potential problems related to the conduct of polls and the reporting of their results that "consumers" among the general public might find useful to keep in mind.

### **Is anyone paying attention?**

One potential difficulty, especially early in a campaign, is that poll results may not be taken at face value because the respondents may not have an interest in the subject yet. When asked a question, they may give a response off the top of their heads in order not to appear stupid or uninformed, but the response might be quite different later when they have more information. Analysts term this problem "non-attitudes."

An example of this phenomenon is offered by polling on possible presidential contests (called "trial heats"—like Clinton versus Dole) a year or more in advance of the election. When asked whom they would vote for, people will often choose even though they may not be familiar with the options or have reflected on the basis they will eventually use to choose. The results are then dutifully reported in the media, and can shape future coverage and the ability of candidates to raise money and marshal support.

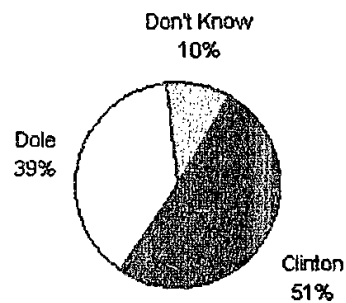
### ***Inside:***

Consider the different picture

## Public health surveys

we get when the matter is approached somewhat differently. In September of 1995 the Wirthlin Group (a professional polling organization) asked a national sample of registered voters: "Who would you like to see become President of the United States?" In this case, however, no candidate list was offered, and we should not be surprised that no individual received a large measure of support. (Clinton was mentioned by 22%, and Senator Dole was next with 9%.) The most revealing result was that 47% of the sample said they didn't have an opinion. Thus, trial heats in these circumstances do not provide us with much useful information.

## 1996 Presidential Race in Michigan



MSU State of the State Survey  
Jan-Mar 1996, N=947, Sampling Error=3.2%

## How surveys serve the public interest

**Misinterpretations**

## Survey error

Another problem is the misuse or abuse of polls by those disseminating the results. Sometimes this is deliberate, but mostly it involves mistakes by those not sufficiently familiar with technical matters. A recent illustration was offered by three of the major networks using data from an exit poll (which they shared) to project the order of finish of the Arizona Republican primary. They predicted that Dole would finish third, behind Forbes (the winner) and Buchanan, and trumpeted that this showing would be very damaging to Dole's campaign.

Unfortunately for them, the actual results soon revealed that Dole ran second, three points behind Forbes and three ahead of Buchanan. The exit poll had Dole and Buchanan only a point apart--within sampling error, and thus too close to call--but the networks ignored that fact in the race to be first.

**Please tell me more**

A third problem also relates to the Arizona example: political polls are mostly used to track the "horse race" aspects of campaigns, monitoring who is ahead. They tell us a lot about what people are choosing, but relatively little about why. This is a nontrivial matter, because the interpretation of election results, or of poll data about them, can have a major impact on how our government works.

An important recent example involved the Republican Contract With America and the 1994 elections. As legislation connected to the Contract was considered by the House of Representatives, Speaker Gingrich and other GOP leaders often cited the result that every item of the Contract was supported by 60% or more of the public. It was only later that we learned, from Republican pollster Frank Luntz, that no questions were asked about specific pieces of legislation. He said he tested "only ad campaign slogans supporting the Contract."

If political polls are to provide more than just entertainment, we must be careful to interpret them appropriately. As in other important areas, the consumer must beware.

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# Ballot Access News -- November 8, 1998

Volume 14, Number 8

## DEBATES

During September and October 1998, minor party candidates for Governor, U.S. Senator, or Congress-at-large, debated both their major party opponents on television in these 19 states: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, and Wyoming.

This is very similar to 1994, when minor party candidates for those offices debated major party opponents in 20 states: Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia and Wyoming.

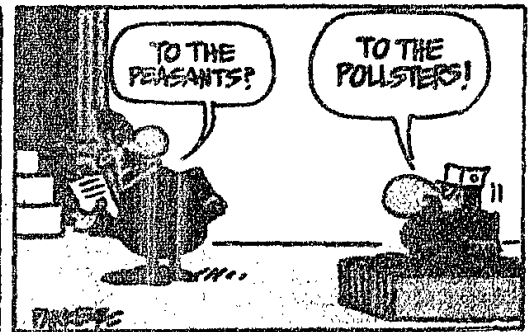
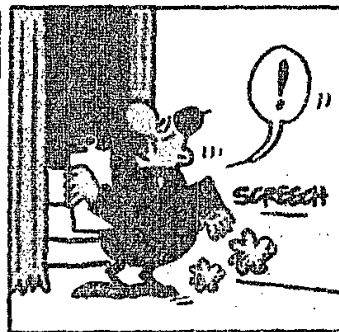
In Oklahoma and South Carolina, where there were only three candidates in the gubernatorial election, League of Women Voters debates were held which excluded that third candidate. The Libertarian Party in South Carolina, and the Reform Party in Oklahoma each sued in state court, but lost.

In both states, the League excluded the third candidate on the grounds that they were below 15% in the polls. However, in both states, no poll which mentioned the third candidate had ever been held! The only polls had mentioned only the Democratic and Republican candidates. Nevertheless, the courts said the League was free to do what it wanted. The South Carolina case was *Moultrie v League of Women Voters & S.C. Educational TV*, in Columbia; in Oklahoma it was *Reform Party of Oklahoma v League of Women Voters and University of Oklahoma*, cj-98-7451-61, in Oklahoma City. The South Carolina League has since tacitly acknowledged that it behaved badly.

In Missouri, Public TV invited the Democratic, Republican and Libertarian candidates for U.S. Senate. The Reform Party candidate sued in federal court, but lost. *Newport v KETC*, 4-98cv 1648 RWS (St. Louis).

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# THE WIZARD OF ID/ by Parker and Hart



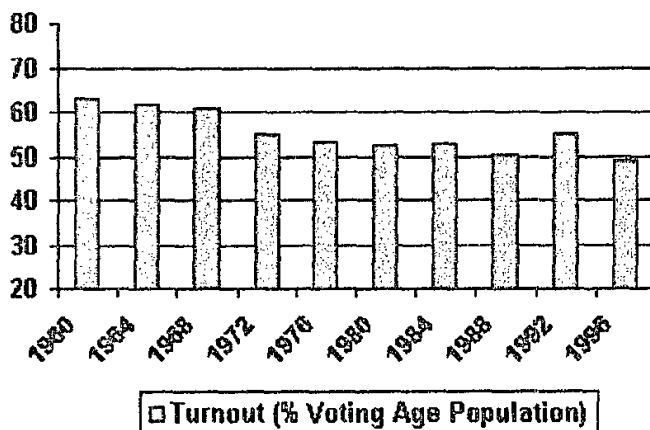
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## Issue Brief

**Voter Turnout**

As more and more citizens across the globe gain the right to vote, fewer and fewer Americans are exercising it. In 1996, only 49 percent of eligible Americans chose to cast a vote for president. This is a 14 percentage point decline in turnout in presidential elections since it peaked in 1960 at 63 percent. Turnout in congressional, state and local elections is typically under 40 percent and predictions are that 1998 turnout will reach an all time low. So what's the problem? Why are so many Americans staying home on election day? Is it a complicated registration process? Apathy and indifference? Anger and alienation? A changing civic culture? There are many theories about why so many Americans don't vote and just as many suggested solutions for the problem.

**Voter Turnout in  
Presidential Elections  
(1960 - 1996)**

**Registration**

Many believe that a complicated and inconvenient process of registering people to vote is a major factor in low turnout. Until 1993, the procedures for registering voters were determined entirely by state and local election officials. In some states you could register by mail, in some you could not, in some states registration forms were easy to find, in others they were not. The identification and verification requirements varied. As a result, only two thirds of eligible voters were registered for most elections during the past three decades. Historically, a

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information, see:  
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large majority of people who are registered (80-90 percent) do turn out to vote but one in three Americans never have the chance.

Because of this, reformers sought to make registration more convenient for citizens. This would increase the universe of potential voters, the thinking went, and turnout would go up. The result was the enactment of the National Voter Registration Act or "motor voter" law in 1993. Motor voter requires the states to adopt a uniform system for registering people to vote in federal elections and made voter registration a part of the process of applying for a drivers license. The good news is that motor voter was a huge success, registering an estimated 11 million more voters in time for the 1996 election. The bad news is turnout in that election was lower than it had been since 1924. Most of the newly registered did not turn out. Clearly, easing the administrative barriers to voting is important (an unregistered citizen cannot vote) but the 1996 election is evidence that the root causes of low turnout are much deeper.

### **Motivation**

Why aren't people motivated to vote? Some say its because they're uninformed and apathetic, others say it's due to their anger and cynicism, still others say that they have rejected an unhealthy political system. How do we increase turnout? Some argue for more education, others for legislation to reform the electoral process and more substantive campaigns. One thing is certain, there is no magic bullet solution.

Citizen activists work hard to educate the public about candidates and issues with a special emphasis on low income, minority and younger citizens whose turnout rates are lower than the average. If we register and inform citizens, the thinking goes, they will be motivated to vote. Yet, despite these educational efforts and the dawn of the "information age," turnout continues to decline. Some argue that this is because a lack of information is not the real problem. The problem is our campaigns. It may be that non-voters are not as apathetic as many think. It's possible that they have decided to reject an electoral process they consider unfair, untrustworthy and irrelevant to their lives.

One approach is to continue efforts to register and educate the public but also work to change politics by reducing the dominance of money in campaigns, providing more forums for substantive debate and improving the quality of the campaign discourse, especially on television. If we can change the nature of campaigns themselves and make them more engaging for



citizens, public confidence in the process will rise and non-voters will be more likely to participate. But would this be enough? Or, does the problem go still deeper?

### **Culture**

Many citizens are disengaging, not only from voting, but from all kinds of civic involvement. This may be due to broader cultural trends not directly related to politics. Americans in the 90's have limited leisure time, have access to all kinds of services from the privacy of their home and rely primarily on television for information about the world. These trends tend to isolate people from one another and diminish our capacity to collectively address public problems through government action. The process of public policy-making on the local, state and national levels is left to an increasingly small group of active voters and leaders. While Americans continue to be involved in volunteer work and community building efforts, they are not active in civic networks, groups that try to connect them with elected leaders and government agencies. In the past three decades, active involvement in civic organizations has dropped. Americans still care about their communities, but they don't think politics and government matter. It is in this environment that we hold elections for public office and hope that people will come.

It is possible that politics simply reflects rather than challenges these cultural trends. "All politics is local," former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill famously stated in the 1960's. But is it still true? Television has fundamentally changed campaigns by shifting the focus from grassroots organizing to costly advertising. For the vast majority of Americans, elections happen only on television. They are shows with bad actors and a bad script, no more relevant to their lives than any other television spectacle. In this sense, politics has adapted to the changing culture just like other institutions. Clearly, politics is less and less local and the public is less and less interested.